

Jesus Died That We Might Live Through Him



Thrust Statement: Jesus is the propiation for our sins.

Scripture Reading: 1 John 4:9-10; Ephesians 2:4-5

As one reflects upon the death of Christ, one is confronted with one of the greatest mysteries of all times. The death of Christ, to some extent, is a paradox—He died that we might live. The death of Jesus is the greatest example of love known to humanity—God became flesh. The Cross of Jesus is upon the lips of every Christian. What does the death of Jesus mean to you? Do you reject His death for your salvation? Do you crucify the Son of God afresh by your rejection of Him in your daily walk? Have you allowed the death of Jesus to mold your everyday actions toward God and toward others? Do you accept God’s analysis of the plight of humanity—“dead in your transgressions and sins” ([Ephesians 2:1](#)).^[1]

Many individuals fail to see their dilemma—dead in transgressions and sins. When one is without Christ, he or she is dead. Every person who is separated from Christ is excluded from citizenship in heaven, foreigners from God’s new covenant of promise, without hope, and without God in the world. Paul, in seeking to capture the plight of humanity without God and Christ, expresses the utter hopelessness of one without God and one without Christ:

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is

our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (**Ephesians 2:11-22**).

In this Epistle, Paul describes those without Christ as dead in their sins. But, if one is willing to accept Jesus as the Savior of the world, then He will make one alive. He died in order that we might live through Him. During the Last Supper, Jesus again calls attention to His death for the forgiveness of sins: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (**Matthew 26:28**). One can hardly reflect upon this statement by Jesus without reflection upon the words of Isaiah:

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all (**Isaiah 53:5-6**).

The Holy Spirit says that as a result of His punishment, God brought peace to sinful humanity. It is the death of Christ upon the Cross that we are healed. Jesus, too, speaks of this death in His remarks to Nicodemus:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son (**John 3:16-18**).

Did Jesus refer to His crucifixion in this statement concerning God sending His "one and only Son" for the salvation of mankind? Listen to the remarks of Jesus preceding this most revealing statement about salvation: "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life" (**3:14-15**). Yes, Jesus speaks of His death through crucifixion. Even before this revelation to Nicodemus, Jesus spoke of His death in His remarks to the Jews when they questioned Him about His authority to discipline them about their

activities in the Temple (2:12-16). In the course of their questioning Him, they requested a sign from Him to demonstrate His right to act in this manner. Jesus responded by saying: “**Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days**” (2:19).

The Jews did not understand His remarks. They thought He had reference to the Temple built by Herod, which took forty-six years to build (2:20), but John adds the following comment to call attention to the nature of this prophecy: “But the temple he had spoken of was his body” (2:21). Even though the disciples heard this saying, nevertheless, it was not until after the crucifixion that this declaration to the Jews became clear to the chosen twelve. Listen to John the apostle as he explains: “After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken” (2:22). This is the historical background to statements made to Nicodemus. Paul comprehended this background; he understood that Jesus died that we might live through Him. Paul, several years after his conversion, wrote to the Romans about the necessity of the death of Jesus:

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus (Romans 3:21-26).

It is in this same vein that Paul wrote to the Colossians about Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation (Colossians 1:21-22).

Again, Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility (Ephesians 2:13-16).

The author of Hebrews also understood that Jesus died that we might live through him. He wrote:

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant (**Hebrews 9:15**).

Yes, Jesus died as a ransom to set us free from sin. Peter, too, expresses the truth that Christ died that we might live through Him: “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit” (**1 Peter 3:18**). Once more, John the apostle expresses it this way:

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for ~~the~~ sins of the whole world (**1 John 2:1-2**).

In this same Epistle, one can see John as he recalls what he had written earlier when he recorded the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus (**John 3:1-21**). He gives an excellent commentary on the remarks of Jesus to Nicodemus in his first of three short Epistles (**2: 18-22; 3:16-17**):

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (**1 John 4:9-10**).

Without Christ, there is no salvation. Peter expresses salvation this way: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (**Acts 4:12**). Prior to the crucifixion, Jesus spoke to Martha concerning the death of her brother Lazarus: “**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;**²⁶ **and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?**” (**John 11:25**). Jesus said what no one else could say. Not only did He say, “I am the resurrection and the life,” but He also said, “**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me**” (**14:6**). Jesus does not just simply give life; He is life. John in his first Epistle writes:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us (**1 John 1:1-2**).

John understood Jesus is eternal life. In his Gospel, he wrote: “In him was life, and that life was the light of men” (**John 1:4**). John knew that if one wants eternal life, he or she must accept Jesus as God’s Way of salvation. Listen to John once more as he seeks to convey this message about Jesus: “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not

have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:11-12). This is why it is imperative that one accepts Jesus as the savior of the world. He died that we might live through Him.

Following this incident of Jesus’ conversation with Martha about her brother Lazarus, Philip and Andrew conveyed a request from some from the town of Bethsaida in Galilee to see Jesus (John 12:22), Jesus responded by discussing His death. In the course of this conversation, He once more referred to His death on the cross: “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (12:31-32). Again, one is confronted with the teaching that Jesus died that we might live through Him.

CONCLUSION

Is it any wonder that Paul cries out: “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14). As pointed out earlier, the fundamental problem of lost sinners is that they are dead in transgressions and sins. Only God can make one alive, but God does this through Jesus Christ. You must experience resurrection to have eternal life. We have all sinned and come short of God’s glory. What is the answer? It is Jesus! Jesus is the One that was slain from the creation of the universe for the sins of humanity (see Romans 13:8; 1 Corinthians 1:18—2:5). Again, one must cry out: Jesus died that we might live through Him.

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 John 4:9-10).

^[1]All Scripture citations are from the *New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984), unless stated otherwise.

b Or *as the one who would turn aside his wrath, taking away*